Association of Bexhill Citizens

SOL·ET·SALUBRITAS

50th Anniversary

1945-1995

SOUVENIR BROCHURE

This brochure has been produced under the editorship of Mr S R Badley MBE, Chairman of the ABC, with the invaluable help of Mesdames J M Goff and M G Moorhouse and Messrs J C Brigden, C E Harris, R G Parsons and C W Steel.

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WHY NOT JOIN THE ABC?

FOREWORD

from the President of the Association of Bexhill Citizens

Mr Humphry M Smith OBE

I am honoured and privileged to be President of the Association of Bexhill Citizens in its 50th Anniversary year.

In his book *The Story of Bexhill,* published in 1971, Mr L J Bartley, the much respected former editor of the *Bexhill-on-Sea Observer*, wrote these words:-

> "One of the most important modern influences in town life began at the end of the second world war with the formation of the Association of Bexhill Citizens which has provided a growing cultural element with luncheon and lecture meetings as well as a social programme of wide interests. In promoting civic development it has to some extent taken the place of the old Town and Borough Association which flourished in the early years of the century."

This brochure tells what the ABC has done over the 50 years since a group of public-spirited men and women founded it in the belief that it could play a role in fostering civic loyalties and in strengthening the community life of Bexhill in the aftermath of long years of war.

Over the 50 years since the ABC was formed, much has changed in Bexhill. The Town itself has expanded and from having borough status it has become the headquarters of the far-flung District of Rother, losing to the County Council some former responsibilities for local affairs. The population of Bexhill has increased numerically largely through immigration from other parts of the country, and the native population has become a smaller part of the whole. People's needs and how they spend their time and money have also changed with the introduction of television, the greater use of the car and package holidays.

The ABC has adapted to these changes and modernised, without departing from the principles on which it was founded, and because of its broad range of activities has sustained its membership in excess of 1100 year-on-year.

This successful story reflects great credit on the farsighted founders of the ABC and on their many successors.

I echo the thanks that successive Managements have expressed in their Annual Reports year after year for the support and encouragement the ABC has enjoyed from Councillors, the Staff of the Town Hall and Pavilion, the local Press and from other community organisations.

The ABC looks back on its past with pride; its future will depend on the willingness of coming generations to shoulder voluntarily the responsibilities of managing this unique organisation.

Humphrey Smith

The Association regrets that it has not been possible to name in the brochure more than a few of the many devoted individuals, past and present, whose contribution to the work of the ABC entitles them to recognition and thanks. Among them, and pivotal to everything the ABC has undertaken, are the ten Hon General Secretaries named below:-

Mr A C Compton	1945-47	Mr A E Trussler	1948
Mrs E Myers	1949-56	Mrs R Haywood	1957-61
Mrs P Mayhew	1962-70	Mrs D A Wade	1971-76
Miss E Riddell	1977	Miss M Robinson	1978-84
Mr W C T Buss	1985-88	Mr R G Parsons	1989-

Birth of The Association of Bexhill Citizens

This story might never have been told had it not been for a man with foresight, vision, and the dynamic qualities and ability to motivate. That man was Mr A E (Tom) Gardner whose biography appears elsewhere in this brochure.

The story begins in 1944 when the Second World War was seen likely to be coming to an end and the time would arise to restore Bexhill to peacetime conditions and to rehabilitate returning servicemen and women. As a contribution to that process, a group of public-spirited citizens, led by Tom Gardner, felt in his own words "that there was need for the formation of an association which would be independent, non-party, and non-sectarian; which would encourage civic interest and stimulate citizenship; which would be concerned with the promotion of the happiness and wellbeing of the residents of Bexhill and would at all times take a close interest in matters affecting the development of the Town; an association which would be ready to suggest and to promote schemes to increase amenities and at all times to integrate community life".

We know that the formation of such a body to be called **The Association of Bexhill Citizens** had general support at an inaugural public meeting held on 12 April 1945, and that the first meeting of the ABC took place on Thursday, 17 May 1945 in the De La Warr Pavilion.

Fifty years later, with unchanged aims and objects, the ABC continues to flourish, meeting the social and leisure needs of its 1,300 members and making representations on civic matters to Local, County and Central Government.

It took a series of meetings to bring about the birth of the ABC. The *Bexhill-on-Sea Observer* reports one of the earliest would have been on 11 November 1944 in the Granville Hotel, chaired by the President of Bexhill Rotary. It was addressed by Mr Charles F Callow, Secretary of the Hastings Civic Society and a former Bexhill Rotarian who called for Bexhill to form a civic society. The retiring Mayor of Bexhill, Councillor Mr W H Hughes, supported the general concept.

In December of that year further meetings were held with a view to launching a civic society, and names for it were suggested. At one of these meetings attended by A E Gardner, A C Compton, Lt Col Hoskings, G M Davies, T J Griffiths, A E Bell, J M Poole, The Rev Dan Pilkington, Canon J M Swift, R A Larkin, Alan S J Stevens, W S File, Mrs P W Phillips, and Mrs S C Wellingham, it was decided that the name should be The Association of Bexhill Citizens, and the annual membership fees would be 2s 6d for adults, 1s 0d for under eighteens, and free for H M Forces. Those attending this meeting became known as the *Formation Committee* and according to the Bexhill Observer took the decision that the Executive Committee of the new body should consist of 12 members:- Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Hon Secretary, Assistant Hon Secretary, Hon Treasurer, and 7 others.

There followed in March 1945 a meeting in the Devonshire Hotel of the Formation Committee with representatives of local organisations to agree the agenda for the inaugural meeting of the ABC on 12 April and to hear Mr Gardner, the Chairman, declare that a letter would be sent to all householders in Bexhill with the proposed constitution. He is said to have concluded his remarks with "God helps those who help themselves; that applies particularly to a committee of citizens; they must help themselves and can best do that by meeting as one body".

The inaugural meeting on 12 April 1945 in the De La Warr Pavilion was chaired by the Mayor of Bexhill, Alderman W E Bowery, and addressed by Mr Hannen Swaffer, the famous writer and critic, who spoke at length on citizenship and the need for building a new world after the war. Those present voted to bring the ABC into existence.

On Thursday, 17 May 1945 the newly established ABC held its first meeting with Mr Gardner in the chair, supported by Mr A C Compton as Secretary, and Mr T Griffiths as Treasurer. The initial membership at that date numbered 1,106; the bank balance was £113 3s 6d from which had to be deducted £46 5s 0d for expenses incurred in forming the Association. The Formation Committee was elected to be the Executive Committee during the ABC's first year.

That is the end of the story of the beginning. What has been the performance of the ABC since then? Ten years after it was founded Tom

Gardner wrote an article for the Bexhill Observer on 16 April 1955 about the ABC. Extracts from this reveal that in the beginning the Association dealt with:-

> "drama and play reading; gramophone recitals; religious activities; youth; photography; various social activities; women's interests, *etc* and in all of these was exceedingly active. One result of these endeavours was the introduction to Bexhill of the Townswomen's Guilds which are now very strong in the Borough.
>
> The Association ran its own orchestra for a considerable time, and sponsored celebrity concerts on Sunday evenings at the De La Warr Pavilion, but had to abandon these because of the financial strain; was also responsible for the formation of the local branch of the Council of Churches through its Religious Activity Group and since that time has sponsored religious drama. It ran cookery and dressmaking classes at the School of Domestic Economy and introduced folk dancing to Bexhill, assisting in a successful folk dancing festival.
>
> The ABC investigated and inaugurated the introduction of colour harmony, and although its impact was not immediately apparent, it has been pleasing to the sponsors to see that over the years the suggestions put forward at that time have borne fruit among the tradespeople of the Borough when their shop premises have been redecorated. For a year it published it's own journal - the ABC Journal - but rising costs of production made it necessary to close down and substitute a newsletter.
>
> It revived table tennis in the borough, and as a result there is now a table tennis league. It sponsored a national bridge drive in co-operation with the *British Bridge World.*
>
> Following a series of discussions 'Should Council

Elections be conducted on a party political basis?', it has arranged annually for a meeting to be held just before election day at which a free platform is provided for candidates at Municipal elections to make a statement.

The monthly civic luncheons of the Association have become established and the afternoon lectures are a part of communal life of the town, while the Gift Tree Committee is an offshoot of the ABC, as is the Bexhill Citizens' Orchestra. The annual Drama festivals and the Hastings prizewinners' concert just held, are all due to the activity of the Association.

There was also begun a series of lectures for townspeople which were to be addressed by the Town Clerk and Chairman of the Council Committees, but unfortunately lack of public support caused the abandonment of this series. The Association has a standing sub-committee to deal with the rate demand, both County and Town, and it has other sub-committees all of which are watching various matters of interest to its members in connection with the development of the Borough. No less than six members of the Executive Committee over the years have been or are Town Councillors, and in order to preserve the community spirit each new resident to the town is welcomed with a special letter.

Today (1955) the ABC's membership is still in excess of 1000 and is testimony to its worth in the life of the town and the feeling that it has engendered among the residents.

One remembers those stalwarts of the earlier years: The Rev H J Oliver, Mrs Lyte, who was the second Chairman, Mr W H Hughes, Mr E J Burman, Dr F E England, Major Morris, Mr Guy Inglis, The Rev Dan Pilkington, Mr B G Ruffhead, and to more recent times, Councillor Mrs Myers, Mr P W Bullock, Alderman G H Goodwin, Mr F King and Mr Palmer. But there are

many whose names one never hears to whom special thanks should be given. They worked for the Association unsparingly and though they did not perhaps realise it they were building Bexhill itself into a community.

Has it been worthwhile? Of course it has. But I would like to see the Association with its own headquarters and with a greater spread of activity. Most of all I would like to see the younger generation taking hold and shaping the Association into an even better instrument of working democracy".

The foregoing account by Mr Gardner of the ABC's first 10 years is elaborated upon in the following pages which tell the story of the ABC's 50 years involvement in civic and community affairs.

To end this first part of the story let us remind ourselves that for people across the world, 1945 was a momentous year. March saw the death of David Lloyd George at the age of 82; followed by the death in April of America's President Franklin Delano Roosevelt aged 63. April also saw the end of the Italian Dictator Benito Mussolini and the infamous Adolf Hilter. In August the atom bomb was dropped on Hiroshima. 8 May saw the end of the war in Europe followed by the surrender of Japan on 14 August. In the UK the Labour Party won the election, 393 seats to 213, much to the disappointment of Mr Winston Churchill, the great wartime leader.

Compared with events such as those, the birth of the Association of Bexhill Citizens in 1945 was unimportant. But in Bexhill, a little town on the south coast, it is significant that amidst the hardships of partial isolation and destruction by air raids and doodlebugs, its citizens looked ahead to form an Association that has endured for fifty years and given added meaning to life for several generations of Bexhill inhabitants.

(The ABC acknowledges the help of Mr John Dowling (Bexhill-on-Sea Observer) in the preparation of this article.)

Tom Gardner 1900-1971

by Peter Evenden

Alfred Edward Gardner was born in 1900 and, for a now unknown reason, his parents decreed that thereafter he should be known as Tom - and so it was!

The first eight years of his life were spent in Malta and South Africa. He was then returned to the UK where he was educated in Sheffield.

It was intended that he should have a career in steel chemistry, but after qualifying he enlisted in 1918, in the King's Own Light Infantry.

Following demobilisation, he found - to quote his own words - "that the bottom had fallen out of the steel trade" and that it offered no suitable prospects. He, consequently, worked for a while with the YMCA where he met a certain Mr F W Dodge and, through him, joined the *Daily Express* in 1922.

That journal was engaged in a battle to establish itself as one of Britain's principal daily newspapers and Tom became one of a dynamic team better known as "Lord Beaverbrooks's bright young men". This team consolidated the position of the Express in face of the fiercest competition from the Daily Mail.

By 1933, however, this task was complete and Tom decided to leave the rat race. He came to Bexhill and set up Gardner's Wholesale Newsagents in premises in Sackville Road. His wife Carol was the first and only Company Secretary and they worked together as a great team.

In 1935 he was invited to join the Rotary Club of Bexhill and, not being a man who could long restrict his desire to serve the community, he gladly accepted. Amongst other things he was a prime mover in the late 1930s in the organisation of Bexhill's annual Gala Days which were the forerunners of the post-war Carnivals.

Then came the Second World War. Bexhill was at first an evacuation area receiving children from London and other more vulnerable parts of Britain. Soon, however, all that changed and Bexhill was itself substantially evacuated, becoming a restricted area.

Such Rotarians who were left in the town found much to do. Tom was Vice-President to Stanley Courtenay in 1940 and 1941 and became President of the Club for the years 1942 and 1943. These two, assisted by a few stalwarts such as George Woodfine, played a tremendous part not only in sustaining local morale but in entertaining and providing services for the thousands of troops, both British and Canadian, who were billeted or encamped in the town and district. Such entertainment included regular Saturday night dances in the main hall of the De La Warr Pavilion, at some of which the drummer was Gunner Spike Milligan!

In the aftermath of the war and Bexhill's gradual return to normality, Tom realised that there was a need to co-ordinate all the varied activities and interests in the Community. He consequently was active in the foundation of the Association of Bexhill Citizens, becoming its Chairman for the first two years and, later on, its first President. He did not retire from active work with the ABC until 1967, and one of his most prized possessions in his later years was a garden seat with commemorative plaque which was then presented to him, along with an Illuminated Address.

In 1945, Tom stood for the Borough Council and was elected to represent Central Ward with S F Courtenay and R F Botting. He served on the Council for his allotted three years but did not stand again because, as was said at the time, "the necessary restrictions of municipal work were not entirely congenial to him". In other words, he preferred to do his own thing in his own way!

During 1949/51, Tom was Chairman of the Kent and East Sussex District of Rotary International. He made sure that, whilst he was in the Chair, Bexhill hosted the annual District Conference for the first time. It has subsequently proved to be the *only* time!

In the fifties and early sixties he turned his attention in several directions. He was for a long time Vice-President of the St John's Ambulance Brigade and he was Chairman and a prime mover in the annual Safe Driving Rallies which were, at the time, organised jointly by the Bexhill Road Safety Committee and the Rotary Club.

In late 1964 and early 1965, Tom began to consider the need for some organisation of the various voluntary agencies and bodies which

sought to bring comfort to the elderly, infirm and needy in the community. Under his guidance and aided by the Rector, Canon Michael Townroe, Douglas Chamberlain and Peter Evenden, the Caring Community was formed. Tom became the founder-Chairman, a position which he held until he left Bexhill.

The Caring Community was his last big effort. His wife, Carol, died in 1966 and without her support as Company Secretary his interest in the business waned. He gave up the wholesale newsagency but kept the bookselling side of the business and this continues today, now being based in Eastbourne.

In 1968 Tom left Bexhill to live in retirement in the Cotswolds. He did not lose touch however and made frequent visits to Bexhill to meet up with old friends and do some business. On such a trip he attended a Rotary luncheon on 18 May 1971 and, sadly, it was two days later that, on his return journey near Devizes, he was taken ill and died.

A memorial service was held in the Parish Church of St Peter on Friday 4 June 1971. The service was conducted by his old friend Michael Townroe and a packed church was addressed by Bishop Cashmore from Brighton.

Tom was something of an enigma. A most colourful and enterprising personality who drove no one harder than himself, so that his irrepressible vitality was the envy of all with whom he came into contact.

Association with him was, however, not always easy and certainly never led to sinecure although his underlying kindness and human understanding was unfailing.

His life and influence were aptly summed up in 1971 by the late Len Bartley, then Editor of the Bexhill-on-Sea Observer who wrote . . .

> *"When tribute has been paid to all his achievements we shall perhaps chiefly remember the innate kindness and personal magnetism which enabled him to take many fainter hearts along with him on a road which led to the betterment of the community of our town"*

(There are seats in Egerton Park provided in 1972 by the ABC and other organisations as a memorial to Tom Gardner.)

The ABC and Civic Affairs

The section in this brochure under the heading *Birth of the Association of Bexhill Citizens* contains extracts from an article by Mr A E Gardner on the range of activities in which the ABC was engaged during its first 10 years. This section deals with the ABC's involvement in civic affairs and a third section describes its social, cultural and leisure activities.

From day one and throughout its 50 years, civic affairs have always been high on the ABC agenda, making the Association unique among Bexhill voluntary organisations.

From the outset it took a close interest in all matters affecting the development of the Town and, in its early years, did this by meeting regularly with Councillors and officials and by holding public meetings attended by local dignitaries to answer questions. It also held regular luncheons at which after-dinner speakers often enlarged on civic matters. It is recorded that in 1949, seven civic luncheons were organised in that one year.

Although stopping short of putting up candidates of its own at local elections (because its constitution barred party allegiances), the ABC held a public meeting in 1950 on "Whether party politics should figure in Local Government" and for twenty years after that event, held meetings at which candidates for local elections presented themselves to the electorate.

In the 50s the ABC became a member, until 1982, of the Central Council of Civic Societies (later to be known as the Civic Trust). During those years it was said to be the largest civic society in Great Britain and one of the most active. The ABC joined the Federation of Sussex Amenity Societies *(FSAS)* on its formation in 1967. This body, set up to promote co-operation between civic societies across both East and West Sussex, has become influential, and is supportive of many ABC endeavours.

Before 1960, all Executive Committee members involved themselves in public affairs but as the Association's range of other activities broadened, it set up in 1960 a Civic Development sub-committee, under the Chairmanship of Mr E J (Eric) Burman, an office he

held for 10 years. He was a local businessman who had been Chairman of the ABC in 1953/4. Mr Burman later became the ABC representative to the FSAS, and was a member of the Executive Committee of that body for many years. It is interesting that of the five persons who succeeded Mr Burman as Chairman of the Civic Development sub-committee, one became a President, another a Vice-President and three became Chairmen of the ABC.

As required by the ABC's Constitution, the Civic Development sub-committee, from its establishment to the present day, co-operates with other local bodies, sending representatives to serve on such as the Bexhill Citizens Advice Bureau, the Bexhill Road Safety Committee, the Transport Users Group, the Crime Prevention Panel, the Area Health Committee and the Community Health Council. Special mention needs to be made of the valuable services over many years of Mr Alan J (Jack) Williams with several of these liaisons.

The ABC has always advocated that development in and around the Town should be compatible with preserving its identity and character. Not surprisingly, this precept was reiterated, and with admirable foresight, in the ABC's Annual Report for 1963/64, reading as follows:-

> "The approach of Bexhill's turn for investigation by the Boundary Commission is another question to which the Town's principal civic organisation must give earnest attention. In the years to come, the Association also has a part to play in protecting the character of Bexhill against the impact of the anticipated huge addition to population in the South East, particularly in the event of Britain's entry into the Common European Market and the construction of the Channel Tunnel. More than ever therefore the Association should be treasured and used as a means whereby Bexhillians can express themselves and assist the Borough Council to make the best decisions for the future of Bexhill."

The ABC has engaged constructively in the debates on most of the developments since the war, notably on matters concerning housing, residential homes, traffic problems, public transport, sewage and water,

sea-defences, open spaces, libraries, car parking, industrial and commercial development, environmental issues and Town centre improvements.

Space permits recording, in this article, only a few of the many and varied civic matters with which ABC has been involved. It does not claim "successes" but it is proud that many of its contributions have influenced decisions.

Taking a look back to the earlier years we find

- that the ABC entered into the long-running controversy over a by-pass for the Old Town, which led years later to the construction of King Offa Way in 1982 and also into the debate on the use to be made of the Glyne Gap gasworks site, which now is home to the Ravenside Shopping & Leisure complex; and that
- in 1948, it held a plebiscite on a proposal from the Boundary Commission of that time to merge Bexhill with Hastings and handed over 4000 adverse views from Bexhillians on the subject;
- in 1950, it initiated, with the collaboration of other organisations, a "Gift Tree Fund' to help finance tree planting to beautify the Town. Over 20 years, hundreds of trees were planted through the assistance of the Fund. Years later a one-off sum of £600 was raised by the ABC for tree replacement in the wake of Dutch elm disease;
- in 1952, the ABC made representations to the British Broadcasting Corporation regarding "wireless" reception in the Bexhill area. In reply, the BBC said "a transmitter soon to be installed in Bexhill will be of higher power than the temporary one at Hastings", and "as regards television satisfactory reception on the South Coast will be ensured by 1956". Thirty-nine years later, the subject is still topical!!
- in 1956, it deplored the re-organisation of Local Government which removed Bexhill's "excellent

local water undertaking" to the control of others, and it also held public meetings in connection with the Redcliffe-Maud Report which eventuated in the formation of Rother District Council in 1974;

- in 1963, when pressing the Council for the provision of more off-street parking, it made the suggestion, later taken up by the then Chamber of Commerce, that the Central Station should be roofed over, claiming that, if it were economically practicable, implementation "would make an enormous contribution towards solving Bexhill's parking problems for many years to come";
- also in 1963, the ABC initiated the formation of a Sackville Road "face-lift" committee comprising two of its own members, five occupants of the road and two Chamber of Commerce representatives, with provision for Council representatives. The scheme which emerged was inaugurated in October 1964 by the Mayor, the local MP and a Deputy Lieutenant of the County;
- in 1964 the Council accepted a joint plan from the ABC and the Bexhill Chamber of Commerce for the restriction of parking in main streets and one-way working in roads around the Town Centre, a plan which remains in place to-day;
- in 1968 the ABC opened a fund to buy a lift for the use of the disabled in the De La Warr Pavilion. With the help of other organisations £3000 was raised, and the Council installed the lift in 1972.

The aforementioned illustrative examples of the contributions made by the ABC to Bexhill's civic affairs over the period 1945-1972 set a pattern that the ABC has since consistently followed of advancing ideas to meet changing needs, consistent with enhancing and preserving the historic and distinctive character and identity of Bexhill.

To round off and bring up-to-date this brief exposition of the role of the ABC in civic affairs throughout its 50-year history, mention has to be

made of two current subjects likely to have a profound impact on Bexhill and its citizens in the years to come. They are

- the plans for the Bexhill/Hastings Western By-pass with link roads into Bexhill; and
- the Local Government Review.

On both of these, the ABC has voiced strong opinions. Whilst wholly in favour of the by-pass, the ABC is critical of the planned system of roads linking it to Bexhill, fearing they will not free Bexhill local roads from heavy vehicles journeying to the Pebsham waste plant, and that it will induce an undesirable concentration of traffic in and around the Town centre.

On the future structure of Local Government in Sussex, the ABC made known it favoured the existing two-tier County & District structure but with greater powers devolved from County in order that Districts shall have more control over local matters. For Bexhill itself, the ABC advocates a strong decision-taking body, not having the weaknesses and cost inherent in present Parish/Town Councils. It urges instead an area committee comprising the same 21 Rother District Councillors representing wards in Bexhill who are now Bexhill Charter Trustees (and from whom the Town Mayor is chosen) to be the decision-taking body running the affairs of Bexhill within the framework policies of the District Council.

To conclude this review, it must be stressed that not all the issues that engage the ABC's attention have the high profile significance of those mentioned. Just as important are the representations it makes on Local and County development plans, on planning applications, on environmental issues and the suggestions it makes on safety matters to benefit citizens, such as handrails for pedestrians at windy street corners, and improvements to road layouts and pavement surfaces.

In the years beyond its 50th birthday it is the hope of the ABC that its efforts towards maintaining the character and identity of the Town and its environs will be reinforced by resurgence of interest among Bexhillians and pride in their Town and its affairs.

The ABC's Social, Leisure and Cultural Activities

Once it had been formed, the ABC was eager to play a part in the post-war process of restoring community life in Bexhill. It soon attracted members by forging enterprising programmes of activity to cater for differing needs.

One was a series of afternoon **lectures** held at regular intervals between October and March on as varied a range of subjects as possible so as to attract large audiences from the membership and from the general public. So successful was this cultural venture that it has been repeated annually ever since.

Over 45 years, 19 of these under the chairmanship of Mr J S Cartlidge MBE, the ABC Lectures sub-committee has presented 435 lectures. Looking back over past programmes, there have been speakers from many walks of life, including clergy, MPs, Service Chiefs, historians, novelists, musicians, educationalists and scientists. Several became firm favourites, returning to lecture several times, among them Mr Barry Funnell (8), Messrs Rumley Dawson, W H Dyer, Baylis Smith and the Reverend L E Pocklington (6) and Mrs Catherine Cookson (4). The subjects speakers have chosen range over banking, antiques, income tax, foreign travel, countryside and nature, music, history, even horses (Dorien Williams) and the Press (L J Bartley).

Another activity, starting in the late 40s and featuring regularly in ABC programmes ever since, was **outings** to places of interest, locally or farther afield. Particularly popular, and often attracting enough members to fill two or more coaches, are visits to historic houses and gardens, cathedrals, castles, colleges, exhibitions, museums, wineries, dockyards, river and canal trips, even race meetings. Since their commencement, the number of outings each season has varied between 4 and 11, but in recent years has averaged nearer 9, from April to November.

Almost from its inception, monthly **luncheons**, with a guest speaker, and often with the Mayor in attendance, were held by the ABC in the De La Warr Pavilion for members and their friends. They retained their popularity until 1980, when interest waned. Latterly interest has revived and luncheons often feature in current ABC programmes, but

seldom with a guest speaker.

Fifty holiday **tours** for members have been arranged by the ABC since the first to Warwick in 1966. They have varied in duration from 4 to 8 days, to seaside resorts, inland towns or areas of natural beauty. Popular choices include the Derbyshire Dales, Wye Valley, Cotswolds, Bideford, Torquay, Scarborough, King's Lynn. The tours are by coach with daily excursions.

Throughout the years, the ABC has regularly arranged **visits to theatres**, shows, concerts, operettas and ballet. The first was to an ice-show in 1954. In recent years, classical concerts have been added at the request of members.

Until 1964 it was an ABC habit to hold a New Year Party with dancing and entertainment for members and their friends. That was changed to a Christmas Party, discontinued after 1984.

A notable event arranged by the ABC and held annually from 1949 - 1989 in the De la Warr Pavilion, was the "Prizewinners Concert". The concert enabled Bexhill children winning prizes at the Hastings Musical Festival to perform on stage before a home audience at Bexhill. For many years its organiser was Miss Jean Tucknott.

Since 1955, the ABC has taken a stall at the annual **Hospital Garden Party** arranged by the League of Friends of Bexhill Hospital, selling goods donated by ABC members for this charity.

In the early years the ABC took a keen interest in music and sponsored the Bexhill Concert Orchestra as a separate organisation. This was formed in 1952 and closed down in 1982 for want of musicians. The original chairman was the ABC founder Mr A E 'Tom' Gardner; he was followed by Mr P B Headlam and then by Councillor D A Kimber.

In 1960, the Recorded Music Society was launched with Mr S J Andrews as chairman until 1965. He was succeeded by Mr C T Haddon until 1978 when a New Recorded Music Society was set up with Mrs Ethel Brown as chairman. To this day it continues to meet regularly but is no longer connected with the ABC, though many who attend recitals are ABC members.

The Bexhill Philatelic Society, formed in 1963 at an inaugural meeting under the auspices of the ABC, continues to flourish independently under its current President Mr P J Van Gelder.

For 40 years the ABC held regular weekly whist drives, organised for 20 of those years by Mrs D M Lindstrom.

For many years, from 1960, an Annual Bowls Match for the Carol Gardner Cup took place between men and women ABC members. The competition lapsed for a while, but has now been revived by Mr Jim Brigden. In 1974, Mr A E Underwood, who was later President of the ABC for 6 years, presented a Cup for the ladies' rink with the highest score.

The ABC had no desire to stand by itself aloof from other societies in the Town and in several instances has co-operated with others for specific purposes. Given below are just four examples:-

- it took a leading part in the formation of the Bexhill Council of Churches;
- it initiated an Annual Drama Festival held in the De La Warr Pavilion, to which local dramatic groups were invited to take part; this ran for 15 consecutive years;
- it sponsored in 1972, Bexhill's 1200th Charter Celebration Year, an exhibition in the De La Warr Pavilion of local organisations to "give residents and visitors some idea of the multiplicity of activities in Bexhill and to demonstrate the wide field of service to the community available to those able and willing to lend a hand in some sphere or other";
- it co-operated in 1951 with others in the local activities connected with the celebration of the Festival of Britain.

The organisational structure of sub-committees responsible to the Executive Committee for initiating and promoting the wide range of ABC activities is to-day much as it has been since the beginning, but additional sub-committees have needed to be created to manage any newly introduced activity or to relieve an existing one that is over-burdened.

One such change was made in 1978 with the formation of an Outings and Tours sub-committee to relieve the Social sub-committee which up to then had managed most ABC activities except Civic Development.

In the 28 years of its existence, the "original" Social sub-committee had eight chairmen one of whom Councillor Mrs E J Myers served for 7 years and another Mr G H Inglis for 6 years. The sub-committee secretary for 17 of those years was Mrs M Corby who, on the formation of the "new" sub-committee, became its first chairman and served 6 years. After the change, there remained in the portfolio of the Social sub-committee responsibility for the Prizewinners Concert, the monthly coffee mornings with bring-and-buy stall, the "thank-you" tea party for Newsletter producers and deliverers, the Christmas Party and the ABC stall at the Bexhill Hospital Garden Party.

Some years later, in 1984, it became necessary to transfer Tours to an associate group called Bexhill Citizens Tours. Another associate, named Bexhill Concert Society, was established in 1988 to arrange visits to concerts and theatres. Mr J S (Norman) Cartlidge MBE, who had been Chairman of the ABC for 4 years and deputy chairman since 1983, as well as Chairman of ABC sub-committees organising Lectures, Luncheons and Outings, became Chairman of the above-named associates which recently have amalgamated.

Throughout the ABC's 50 years the work load carried by countless individuals helping with the management of the wide range of activities described in the brochure and with the production and distribution of the monthly newsletter has been immense, all of it borne voluntarily and often for periods of several years and sometimes in more than one capacity - a few examples have been cited in the text. It is this spirit of service-to-the-community for which the ABC was formed that has brought the ABC to this milestone in its history.

PAST PRESIDENTS AND CHAIRMEN

Year ended 31 March	Presidents	Chairmen
1946	-	Mr A E Gardner
1947	-	*do*
1948	-	Mrs Doreen Lyte
1949	Mr A E Gardner	*do*
1950	*do*	Councillor G H Goodwin
1951	*do*	Alderman W H Hughes
1952	The Mayor, Councillor G H Goodwin	Mr W H Hughes
1953	*do*	Mr E J Burman
1954	The Mayor, Councillor G B Coghlan MA	P W Bullock
1955	The Mayor, Councillor Mrs J O Alexander	*do*
1956	*do*	*do*
1957	The Mayor, Councillor E Carter	Mr R A Lusty
1958	*do*	*do*
1959	The Mayor, Councillor J Baker	Mr A E Gardner
1960	*do*	*do*
1961	The Mayor, Alderman R F Botting	*do*
1962	The Mayor, Alderman F E Cooper	Mr W J Dowdell FCA
1963	The Mayor, Councillor Mrs J O Alexander	Mr H E Bedford
1964	The Mayor, Councillor E H Corke	*do*
1965	The Mayor, Councillor A S J Stevens	*do*
1966	The Mayor, Councillor E T Robinson	Rev P Gresty
1967	The Mayor, Councillor Mrs M E Ackland	Dr R Hunter (Acting)
1968	The Mayor, Alderman J Baker	Mrs H M Green
1969	The Mayor, Councillor E T Johnson	*do*
1970	The Mayor, Councillor W A Sole	*do*
1971	The Mayor, Councillor D A Kimber	Mr P B Headlam
1972	The Mayor, Alderman W G Sansom	*do*
1973	*do*	*do*
1974	The Mayor, Councillor H G Morgan	Mr J D Stephenson MA
1975	Town Mayor, Councillor E Haynes	*do*
1976	Town Mayor, Councillor Mrs E Kimber	Mr J S Cartlidge MBE
1977	Town Mayor, Councillor C C Carpenter	*do*
1978	Town Mayor, Councillor Ivor Brampton	*do*
1979	Town Mayor, Councillor E Waite	*do*
1980	Town Mayor, Councillor Mrs L Kimber	Col R Hazzledine OBE
1981	Mrs H M Green	*do*
1982	Councillor Ivor Brampton	*do*
1983	Mrs Iris Burman	Mr Humphry M Smith OBE
1984	Mr G C Vesey CB	*do*
1985	Mrs F Perry	*do*

PAST PRESIDENTS AND CHAIRMEN cont. . .

Year ended 31 March	Presidents	Chairmen
1986	Mr A E Underwood	Mr Humphry M Smith OBE
1987	*do*	*do*
1988	*do*	*do*
1989	*do*	*do*
1990	*do*	*do*
1991	*do*	Mr S R Badley MBE
1992	Mr Humphry M Smith OBE	*do*
1993	*do*	*do*
1994	*do*	*do*
1995	*do*	*do*

PATRONS *

1984	Councillor W D Jones DFC
1985	Councillor Mrs E E Armstrong
1986	Councillor Frank Price
1987	Councillor Leslie Wells
1988	Councillor R Pulford
1989	Councillor S A Boyd
1990	Councillor H J Penny
1991	Councillor B Kentfield
1992	Councillor A J Lutman
1993	Councillor R E Side
1994	Councillor G A Swift
1995	Councillor Mrs C A Bayliss

**** (Chairmen of Rother District Council)***

TREASURERS

Mr T Griffiths	1945	Mr Hector Green AA CCA	1969
Mrs G M Oliver	1946-48	Mrs F Perry	1970-71
Mr A C Compton	1949-51	Miss F Wiedhoft	1972
Mr G Palmer	1952	Mrs F Perry	1973-82
Mr W J Norris	1953	Mr H Wren	1983-87
Mr E J Burman	1954-58	Miss I N Dorling	1988-90
Mr W J Dowdell	1959-60	Mr W T Buss	1991-92
Mr Alan Gardner OBE	1961-68	Mrs J Goff	1993-

Subscription Rates

For each of the first 20 years, members' annual subscription remained unchanged at 2s 6d (12½p), on decimalisation it rose to 15p and by the end of the inflationary seventies, had risen to 100p or £1.00. Considering that £1.00 at that time had the same purchasing power as £3.15s in 1994, the 1995/6 annual subscription of £4 is commensurate with that of earlier years.

Life Membership

This was introduced in 1955 at £1.00 per person, raised to £3.00 in 1978 and to £6.00 in 1979. The scheme ran for 28 years before being abandoned in 1983.

Among the earliest of to-day's 512 Life Members to enrol are Presidents and Officers, past or present, *viz*:-

Councillor Alan S Stevens (1955), founder member, Mayor and ABC President 1965

Mrs Iris Burman (1956) held several offices over 31 years including ABC President in 1983; now Vice-President since 1987

Mr Humphry M Smith OBE (1959) 8 years ABC Chairman 1983-1990, now ABC President since 1992

Mrs F Perry (1965) 10 years ABC Treasurer 1973-82, now Vice-President since 1982

Councillor Eric T Johnson (1967) Mayor and ABC President 1967, and currently a member of ABC Civic Development sub-committee

Councillor Ivor Brampton (1969), Town Mayor and ABC President 1978 and 1982; now a Deputy Lieutenant of East Sussex

Councillor Donald A Kimber (1968), Mayor and ABC President 1971

Mr J S (Norman) Cartlidge MBE (1970), ABC Vice-Chairman 1974-75; Chairman 1976-79; Vice-Chairman 1980-82; deputy Chairman since 1983; Vice-President since 1984

Miss F Wiedhoft (1971), Treasurer 1972, assistant Treasurer 1973-1993; Vice-President from 1995

NB Vice-Presidents are appointed for life, and for differing reasons, most frequently for outstanding services.

OFFICE HOLDERS 1994/95

Patron: Councillor Christine Bayliss
(Chairman Rother District Council)

President: Mr Humphry M Smith OBE

Vice-Presidents: Mr Charles Wardle MP, Mr J S Cartlidge MBE, Mrs I Burman, Mrs A Head, Mr L V Head JP, Mrs F Perry, Miss M A Robinson, Mr J Turrington MBE, Councillor Mrs J Wicks JP, Mr H Wren, Mr A J Williams

OFFICERS

Chairman: Mr S R Badley MBE
Vice-Chairman: Mr C E Harris
Deputy Chairman: Mr J S Cartlidge MBE
Hon General Secretary: Mr R G Parsons
Hon Treasurer: Mrs J Goff
Hon Asst Treasurer: Miss F Wiedhoft (until June 1994)
Mrs J Large (*acting* from June 1994)

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The Officers and Sub-Committee Chairmen *(ex-officio)*
Miss M A Robinson, Mrs G Turner, Mrs E Westlake (until Nov 1994)
Mrs J Lewis (*co-opted* from July 1994) and Messrs J Brigden, C W Steel, A J Williams

Newsletter Editor: Mrs E Westlake (until Nov 1994), Mrs P Levey (from Nov 1994)
Hon Membership Secretary: Mrs J Large
Publicity Officer: Mr C W Steel

SUB-COMMITTEES

FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES

Mr S R Badley MBE *(Chairman)*, Mr R G Parsons *(Secretary)*, Mrs J Goff *(Treasurer)*, Mr C E Harris *(Vice-Chairman)*

CIVIC DEVELOPMENT

Mr S R Badley MBE *(Chairman)*, Mr C E Harris *(Secretary)*, Mrs E M Barralet, Mrs M G Moorhouse, Mrs C Ratcliffe, Mrs M E Sparks, Mr E T Johnson, Mr P W Johnson (from Jan 1995) Mr C W Steel, Mr A J Williams

LECTURES

Mr J Edwards *(Chairman)*, Mrs J Hooper *(Speaker's Secretary)*, Mr P Aldridge (from Sept 1994), Mr J Brigden, Mr K Carpenter, Mr I Frost, Mrs J Goff *(Secretary)*

SOCIAL

Mrs M E Badley *(Chairman)*, Mrs G Turner *(Secretary)*, Mrs M Cardy, Miss J Child, Mrs A Head, Mrs R Hughes, Mrs E Madagan, Miss M Masters, Mrs M Pilbeam, Mrs M G Moorhouse, Mrs D Miller (until Dec 1994)

OUTINGS

Mr J S Cartlidge MBE (until June 1994), Mr B G Hewitt (from July 1994) *(Chairmen)*, Mrs K Prosser (*Secretary*-to June 1994), Mrs J Lewis (from July 1994), Mrs R Dudman, Mrs A Head, Mr W Sunderland, Mrs G Turner, Mrs J Goff

LUNCHEONS

Mr J S Cartlidge MBE (*Chairman*), Mrs J Lewis (*Secretary*), Mrs R Dudman (until Oct 1994); (from Jan 1995), Mrs B Eldridge *(Secretary)*, Mr G Eldridge

WHY NOT JOIN
THE ASSOCIATION OF BEXHILL CITIZENS?
PLEASING PEOPLE FOR 50 YEARS

Would readers of this Brochure, not wanting to keep it, please pass it to friends who may not know of the ABC and be glad to join.

The ABC is unique among Bexhill societies in that it combines all-year-round social, leisure and cultural activities with an on-going involvement in civic affairs. Its Patron is the Chairman of Rother District Council.

Membership is open to adults of any age on payment of a small annual subscription. This covers the issue of a monthly Newsletter to all member-households, office rental, stationery and other costs.

On becoming a member you have the opportunity to join coach parties to places of interest, to concerts, theatres and lunches and on holiday tours and mystery drives with afternoon tea. Coffee mornings are held monthly where you can meet with your friends. For an additional payment, to defray hire charges and fees, you can attend illustrated lectures, held fortnightly in the De La Warr Pavilion during autumn and winter.

The ABC looks to its members to help organise its activities and is always in need of understudies or successors to those presently serving on committees or to give help in some other way. Offers of help from newly enrolled members having particular knowledge or experience, are especially welcome.

The ABC has an office at 4 Endwell Road, above Goddard and Rogers and near the main Post Office. It is staffed from 10 am to noon on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, when the Membership Secretary or the General Secretary are pleased to enrol new applicants.

The ABC's Aims and Objects

THE Association of Bexhill Citizens was founded in 1945 and is an independent, non-party and non-sectarian body representing all local interest. Its aims and objects are:-

(1) To encourage and stimulate Civic interest and pride in Bexhill and to raise the standard of citizenship.
(2) To promote the happiness and general well-being of our citizens.
(3) To co-operate with other bodies for the general good.
(4) To suggest ideas and promote schemes to improve and increase amenities of every kind.
(5) To represent the views of the Association to Local, County or other Authorities.
(6) To promote social activities appropriate to the membership.

The Constitution of the Association was revised at the 1986 Annual General Meeting. Copies of the Constitution can be obtained on application to the General Secretary.

The Heraldic Description
(Blazon)

ARMS: Ermine, a cross consisting of two vertical and two horizontal limbs interlaced gules, in the first quarter a gold mitre, in the second a gold demi-lion joined to the stern end of ship's hull, in the third a star sable, and in the fourth a mallard proper; on a silver chief the sun (only half visible) shining on the sea proper; all within a border azure charged with eight gold martlets.

CREST: On a wreath argent and gules, a mound of sand, and thereon a Martello tower proper.

MOTTO: *Sol et salubritas* - 'Sun and health'.

The sun and the sea depicted in the first point of honour refer to Bexhill as a resort of sun and health-giving seawater.

In the first quarter is Bishop's Mitre, reminding us that Bexhill was owned by the Bishops of Chichester from the Norman Conquest until Henry VIII sacked the Churches. He then gave the land to Lord Buckhurst, ancestor of the Earl De la Warr.

In the second quarter is a demi lion - demi hull of a ship reminding us of our close association and proximity to Hastings, a Cinque Port.

In the third quarter is a star sable (black estorille), the principal housemark of the De La Warr Family Arms.

In the fourth quarter a mallard, housemark of the Brassey Family.

The whole is surrounded by a border containing martlets, reminding us of Sussex in which Bexhill lies. The crest consists of an armed Martello tower on a mound of sand reminding us finally that Bexhill lies within the defence area created to withstand a Napoleonic invasion.

Donald A Kimber